

jectives that President Nujoma spoke so eloquently about in the Oval Office just a moment ago, to make sure that the human needs of the people can be met and that we can continue to make progress there.

Q. —[*Inaudible*] by his ability to turn this into something of a public relations disaster for the United States?

President Clinton. Well, I don't know that it is that. It may be—the issue is whether the Pakistani soldiers erred, and that's for the United Nations to resolve. And I'm sure that it will. But you can't have these kinds of conflicts and expect them to be brutal and illegal on one side and then have a response and expect that there will be nothing controversial about it. That is not to exonerate or to condemn. The United Nations is looking into the Pakistani conduct. There are, I must tell you, conflicting allegations about what occurred and who was actually responsible for the deaths of all the civilians there, and we need to get to the bottom of it. And if procedures need to be changed, if training needs to be tightened, if discipline needs to be imposed, then I think that can be done. But the fundamental mission of the United Nations in Somalia has not changed. And I still believe it's a very important one.

Congressional Black Caucus

Q. Mr. President, in view of the talks that you had with members of the Congressional Black Caucus, is it still necessary for you to meet with the caucus before your plan goes to the House for a vote?

President Clinton. I honestly don't know. I think I've now talked to probably 15 of them in the last several days. I think that depends, in part, on what the Senate does with the economic plan and what the understandings are about what's going to come out of the conference. So I think we'll have to wait and see what the Senate Committee does and then what the Senate actually adopts on the floor, and then we'll make a decision at that time. And of course, anytime they want to see me they know that there's an open door. But whether a meeting is necessary will depend in large measure, I think, on what the Senate does.

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Nujoma.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Exchange With Reporters at the North Portico

June 16, 1993

Campaign Finance Reform

Q. Mr. President, those Senate Republicans, sir, who are now blocking campaign finance reform even though they voted for it before, what do you say to them? I mean, this thing could go down today and be dead.

The President. The real question is what can they say to the American people. What possible reasons can they give other than pure politics for filibustering a bill which they voted for last year? And as I said, this isn't the first time it's happened. It happened on motor voter, but we were able to work that out.

But these are good people, and I think they must be searching their hearts about it and about wondering if they can even begin to defend it on anything other than raw politics. And I'm hoping that there will be some change and some breakthrough. I got some information this morning that it's at least somewhat encouraging, and we'll just keep working on it and hope we can prevail.

Q. Would you agree to give up any public funding? Would that be one way?

The President. Well, the only problem with that is, if you give it all up you have no control on the amount of money being spent. And the argument for the public funding is simply that the Supreme Court has—that unless you give candidates something, you can't condition how much they spend. So if the object is to control the cost of campaigns, as well as to limit the influence of PAC's, and to open the airwaves, it is difficult to meet all those objectives if you don't have some public funding. They're talking about the various compromises. I don't know whether they can reach one, but that's why I hope that Republicans who voted for the bill last year will think about it. It is essential to limit the overall costs of campaigns, and

somehow there's got to be a public funding element to it. Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:15 a.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters During a Luncheon With Business Leaders

June 16, 1993

Economic Program

The President. I'd just like to make one comment to reinforce the importance of passing this economic plan. We've got interest rates now down to a 20-year low and home mortgage rates. And this new headline, "Inflation Slows, Rates Holding," that's the direction we want. We want a steady recovery. And we have got to pass this economic plan and do it in the near future to ensure that that goes on.

Let me just mention one statistic. In the first 4 months of this administration, we had 130,000 new construction jobs in this country because of low interest rates. That is the largest increase in 9 years in a 4-month period. We can bring this economy back if we pass the plan, get the deficit down, keep the interest rates down, and keep the investment flowing to create jobs in the country. And I think it is terribly important. And I just wanted to emphasize that, to impress upon the country the importance of what the United States Senate is grappling with now. They simply have to pass this plan and go forward.

Q. Do you think that there will be a deal? And will it have a significant enough—

The President. I'm encouraged.

Q. —energy tax to make it worthwhile?

The President. Well, it depends on what the—let's look at the final plan. You know, the Senate is going to change the energy tax, but if they have enough deficit reduction and they go to the conference committee, I think that they will come out ultimately with a bill that I'll feel good about.

Supreme Court Nominee

Q. Mr. President, on another subject, were you influenced by the letter writing campaign on behalf of Judge Ginsburg? Did that help persuade you to take another look at her?

The President. No.

Q. Did you read any of the letters?

The President. I read some of the letters that came in on behalf of many candidates. But I was unaware of any big letter writing campaign. I saw seven or eight letters for her.

Q. —influence your decision at all?

The President. No, only that a lot of people thought a lot of her. There were also good letters for, I would say, 10 candidates that I read. I read a lot of letters that came in—

Q. The Marines that are now heading—

Campaign Finance Reform

Q. —campaign financing—the vote on the Hill?

The President. Excuse me?

Q. On the campaign financing, have you heard any more about a possible compromise?

The President. Just what you have, that they're working on it and that they may adopt one which we would find acceptable. But I want to see what they do—

Q. —been in communication with—

The President. A little bit. We know they're trying to work it out. And I'm encouraged. What I said in response, I think, to Andrea's [Andrea Mitchell, NBC News] question this morning, is that I think those five Republican Senators who voted for campaign finance reform last year must surely want to do it again. They know that special interests, financing, and excessive spending have really undermined the public's faith in the political process. So I think we've got a chance to get one.

Q. Mr. President, 2,200 Marines en route to the Somali coast. Can you shed any light on that?

Q. Thank you.

Q. Enjoy your lunch.

The President. Lunchtime.

Q. We don't get any.

The President. You know, I don't believe that. [Laughter]